

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ACCRA 03908 241545Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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-----242326Z 023271 /73

R 241451Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8169

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 3908

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH

SUBJ: GHANAIAN TIMES CALLS ON ARMED FORCES TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOR

1. ON MAY 24 GOG-CONTROLLED TIMES ADMITTED EDITORIALY AND WITH NOTABLE UNDERSTATEMENT THAT "WITHIN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, THE NATION HAS EXPERIENCED A FEW MINOR TREMORS IN THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE." PAPER URGED ARMED FORCES, "AS AN URGENT FIRST STEP. . . TO TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT ITSELF AND ADJUST MUCH MORE SUITABLY TO THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REVOLUTION." TIMES CALLED ON ARMED FORCES TO OBEY FOLLOWING RULES: "OBEY ORDER IN ALL YOUR ACTIONS; DO NOT TAKE A SINGLE NEEDLE OR PIECE OF THREAD FROM THE MASSES; PRESERVE EVERYTHING ENTRUSTED TO YOU AND TURN IN EVERYTHING CAPTURED; SPEAK POLITELY; PAY FAIRLY FOR WHAT YOU BUY; RETURN EVERYTHING YOU BORROW; PAY FOR ANYTHING YOU DAMAGE; BE FIRM AND DON'T BEND; DO NOT TURN BUSINESSMEN WHILE SERVING; DO NOT TAKE LIBERTIES WITH WOMEN; BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF." EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT ONLY BY THESE STEPS CAN WE "FIRMLY UNITE THE ARMY WITH THE PEOPLE AND OVERCOME OUR MUTUAL PROBLEMS."

2. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST ADMISSION BY THE TIMES THAT WIDE-SPREAD INDISCIPLINE AND CORRUPTION IN THE ARMED FORCES IS SERIOUSLY ERODING CONFIDENCE IN THE SMC. IN THE PAST, TIMES HAS ALWAYS BEEN AMONG THE FIRST TO CHAMPION NEW SMC POLICIES. THIS ADMISSION, COMING AS IT DOES IN THE WAKE OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ACCRA 03908 241545Z

FOOD SHORTAGES AND COUP RUMORS, SUGGESTS OFFICIAL REALIZATION THAT THE SHIP OF STATE IS ON THE ROCKS AND TAKING WATER FAST. TIMES EDITOR GYAWU-KYEM HAS LONG BEEN A PILOT FISH FOR ACHEAMPONG AND MUST REALIZE HE WILL BE OUT OF A JOB -- OR WORSE -- IF THE CHAIRMAN FALLS. EDITORIAL MAY THUS ALSO REPRESENT A LAST-DITCH ATTEMPT ON HIS PART TO GET ARMED FORCES TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOR BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

3. WE CONTINUE TO HEAR MUTTERINGS AGAINST ACHEAMPONG AND SMC AND HINTS THAT THEY WILL SOON BE DUMPED. HOWEVER, ACCRA REMAINS CALM AND LACKS ANY VISIBLE SENSE OF TENSENESS OR EXPECTANCY. WHILE A COUP MIGHT BE UNLEASHED WITHOUT WARNING OR UNION GOVERNMENT SUDDENLY PROCLAIMED AS AN EFFORT TO BUY TIME, OUR GUESS IS THAT NEITHER WILL HAPPEN IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. NEVERTHELESS, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THIS REGIME IS ON THE WAY OUT AND WILL BE REPLACED BEFORE TOO LONG. SMITH

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Message Attributes

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